

CLAIMS:

1. A method of character-by-character data entry that is displayed on a screen through sequential selection of characters of a collection of characters by a human user comprising:

5 providing a plurality of display windows on the display;

defining character groups of the collection of characters, each character group to be displayed in a display window on a time variable basis;

10 successively displaying the characters of each character group in each respective display window for a display time to the user for selection, whereby a character set is simultaneously displayed to the user in the respective plurality of display windows;

15 detecting the selection by the user of a character displayed in a display window; and

20 entering the detected character, whereby a user may select characters as they are displayed in the display window and enter data.

2. The method of Claim 1, wherein characters comprise word processing alphanumeric characters and punctuation marks enabling data entry of human language text and mathematical expressions.

25 3. The method of Claim 1, wherein step of displaying the characters of each character group in each respective display window comprises simultaneously displaying a character capable of being selected by the user, a previously displayed character of the character group, and the next to be displayed character of the character group.

4. The method of Claim 1, wherein the user defines the number of the display windows in the step of defining a plurality of display windows.

5. The method of Claim 4, wherein the user defines the character group in the step of defining character groups.

6. The method of Claim 1 further comprising the step of defining a character display time for display of each character of each character group in each display window;

7. The method of Claim 1, wherein the user defines the character display time in the step of defining the character display rate and display time.

8. The method of Claim 1, wherein the character groups preferably comprise no more than three characters.

9. A user operable data entry system for entering data in a data set by selection of characters from a defined collection of characters comprising:

20 a data entry display screen;

a plurality of character display windows on said data entry display screen for displaying characters;

means for dividing the collection of characters into a like plurality of character groups each having a further plurality of characters arranged in a predetermined order;

25 means for scrolling the characters of the characters of each character group through a respective character display window such that a character set is displayed in the display windows for a display time;

means for selecting a character displayed in a display window during the display time for entry; and

means responsive to the selection for entering the selected character in a data set.

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10. The system of Claim 9, wherein the scrolling means comprises means operable by the user for reversing the direction of advancement of a character of each character group into the display window for the character group.

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11. The system of Claim 9, wherein the scrolling means comprises:
means for displaying a character of the character set in each display window for a display time;
means for timing out the display time; and
means for replacing the character displayed in the display window with the next character in the predetermined order of the characters or each character group upon expiration of the display time.

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12. The system of Claim 9, further comprising means operable by the user to halt the timing out of the display time and freeze the character display in a display window.

13. The system of Claim 9, wherein the scrolling means comprises means operable by the user for scrolling a character of each character group into the display window for the character group.

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14. The system of Claim 9, wherein the character displaying means for displaying the characters of each character group in each respective display window comprises means for simultaneously displaying a character capable of being

selected by the user, a previously displayed character of the character group, and the next to be displayed character of the character group.

15. The system of Claim 9, further comprising means operable by the user to define the number of the display windows of the means for defining a plurality of display windows.

16. The system of Claim 9, further comprising means operable by the user to define the character set of each character group.

17. The system of Claim 9, further comprising the means operable by the user for step of defining a character display time for display of each character of each character group in each display window;

18. The system of Claim 9, wherein the character groups preferably comprise no more than three characters.

19. The system of Claim 9, further comprising an advance key usable to advance a character into a character display window in first direction for selection and a back-up key to return a character into a character display window that has advanced in the first direction past the display window.

20. The system of Claim 9, further comprising a freeze key usable to halt character scrolling and a back-up key to return a character into a character display window that has left the display window.